

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 AS-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
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INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
TRSE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 /070 W  
-----100933 081102Z /10

O R 080923Z JUL 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9254  
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI  
AMCONSUL HONG  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAC HONOLULU  
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA  
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBSSY SINGAPORE  
AMCONSUL NAHA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 10278

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, JA  
SUBJECT: LDP BATTLES TO KEEP UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY

REFS: (A) TOKYO 9427 (B) TOKYO 7276

SUMMARY: TWO DAYS BEFORE VOTE, MEDIA CONSENSUS, WHICH INDEPENDENT  
EMBASSY ANALYSIS CONFIRMS, IS THAT LDP WILL LOSE ITS BARE  
UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY BY FEW SEATS IN JULY 10 ELECTION;  
SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS WILL DROP A FEW SEATS; AND  
SMALLER CENTRIST PARTIES, PARTICULARLY NEW LIBERAL  
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CLUB, WILL PROBABLY GAIN. DURING PAST TWO WEEKS OF  
VIGOROUS CAMPAIGNING, NO ISSUES AFFECTING U.S. INTERESTS  
HAVE EMERGED, IN FACT NO MAJOR ISSUES AT ALL. EVEN  
POTENTIAL LOSS OF LDP MAJORITY, MAIN CAMPAIGN THEME,  
HAS FAILED TO ATTRACT VOTER INTEREST. IN THESE CIRCUM-  
STANCES, VOTER TURNOUT -- PARTICULARLY BY INCREASINGLY  
LARGE "FLOATING" VOTE -- MAY WELL BE KEY TO ELECTION

OUTCOME.

IF ELECTION GOES AS WE NOW EXPECT, RESULTS ARE ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE INTERPRETED AS CONTINUATION OF CENTRIST PARTY "BOOM" AND ENCOURAGE TALK OF "INEVITABLE" COALITION GOVERNMENT. BUT IT WOULD NOT HAPPEN IMMEDIATELY, IF AT ALL. ONLY LOWER HOUSE, WHERE LDP STILL HOLDS CLIM MAJORITY, CAN COMPEL COALITION AND LDP PROBABLY CAN GUIDE MAJOR LEGISLATION THROUGH UPPER HOUSE WITH AD HOC HELP FROM ONE OR MORE CENTRIST PARTIES. FUKUDA IS LIKELY TO REMAIN AT HELM, EVEN IN EVENT OF FAIRLY SHARP LDP SETBACK, AND BASIC GOJ POLICY TOWARD U.S. WILL REMAIN STEADY. ELECTION MAY, HOWEVER, PROMPT BUSINESS, LABOR AND EVEN YOUNGER CANDIDATES THEMSELVES TO RECONSIDER THEIR LONG-STANDING POLITICAL ALLEGIANCES. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE EMBASSY'S LAST REPORT TWO WEEKS AGO (REF A), NO MAJOR ELECTION ISSUE HAS APPEARED. OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE CONTINUED TO ATTACK LDP FOR HIGH PRICES AND FAILURE TO BRING ECONOMY OUT OF SLUMP, BUT CRITICISM HAS NOT CAUGHT ON AS SPECIFIC ISSUE. CONTINUING POSSIBLE TREND BEGINNING LAST DECEMBER, U.S.-JAPAN MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY AND OTHER ISSUES AFFECTING AMERICAN INTERESTS HAVE NOT EMERGED. IN ABSENCE OF SPECIFIC ISSUES, DOMINANT THEME IN MEDIA AND ON STUMP HAS BEEN WHETHER LDP WILL LOSE ITS UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY. (AS PREVIOUSLY CONFIDENTIAL

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NOTED, LDP NEEDS TO WIN ALL OF ITS 65 SEATS AT STAKE THIS YEAR JUST TO RETAIN BARE UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY.) OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE KEPT UP THEIR TALK OF "NEW ERA" IN JAPANESE POLITICS. LDP, PARTICULARLY PRIMIN FUKUDA, HAS CONTINUALLY TOLD AUDIENCES POLITICAL INSTABILITY COULD RESULT IF LDP MAJORITY IS LOST. EVEN THIS ISSUE OF PARTY BALANCE, ACCORDING TO OBSERVERS, HAS ATTRACTED LITTLE VOTER INTEREST.

2. LDP IS CLEARLY THREATENED WITH LOSS OF MAJORITY, AND WITH MUCH AT STAKE, IT HAS PULLED OUT ALL STOPS DURING PAST TWO WEEKS. ALTHOUGH FACTIONAL RIVALRIES AND LEADERSHIP STRUGGLES HAVE HAMPERED MANY PAST LDP CAMPAIGNS, PARTY APPEARS TO HAVE CLOSED RANKS IN UNUSUAL SHOW OF UNITY, AND MEMORIES OF LOCKHEED HAVE DIMINISHED. PRIMIN FUKUDA HAS BEEN CRISSCROSSING COUNTRY ON CAMPAIGN TRAIL AND OTHER CABINET MINISTERS WERE ORDERED LAST WEEK TO DO LIKEWISE. LDP HAS EVEN ASSIGNED HEADQUARTERS MAN TO OVERSEE CAMPAIGN IN EACH PREFECTURE AND MOBILIZE PARTY FAITHFUL. FUNDING, APPARENT PROBLEM AT OUTSET OF CAMPAIGN, IS NOW SAID TO BE MORE THAN ADEQUATE. AS RESULT OF ALL THIS ACTIVITY, POLLS

WHICH HAD LDP BELOW WIDELY AGREED "SUCCESS/FAIL" 60-SEAT  
LINE TWO WEEKS AGO, NOW HAVE IT ABOVE.

3. OPPOSITON PARTIES HAVE ALSO STEPPED UP CAMPAIGN  
PACE IN LAST FEW DAYS. JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP),  
ORIGINALLY EXPECTED TO LOSE 8-10 SEATS, CAUSING PROBABLE  
INTRA-PARTY CONFRONTATION AND LEADERSHIP CHANGE, IS  
CAMPAIGNING HARD TO LIMIT LOSSES. HIDEO DEN, JSP BRIGHT  
STAR, STILL HAS GOOD CHANCE OF FINISHING FIRST IN NATIONAL  
CONSTITUENCY IN COMPETITION WITH SOCIALIST SPLINTER PARTY  
LEADER SATSUKI EDA AND COMMUNIST (JCP) CHAIRMAN MIYAMOTO.  
NONETHELESS, POPULARITY OF JCP AND JSP BEYOND RANKS OF  
ORGANIZED SUPPORT GROUPS HAS BEEN ON WANE ACCORDING TO  
POLLS THIS WEEK. ELECTORAL COOPERATION DEALS THAT  
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OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE WORKED OUT (JCP-JSP, DSP-CGP,  
AND JSP-CGP -- REF A) ARE UNLIKELY TO AFFECT OUTCOME  
SIGNIFICANTLY.

4. BIG QUESTION FOR THIS ELECTION REMAINS HOW CENTRIST  
PARTIES WILL FARE. NEW LIBERAL CLUB (NLC), DEMOCRATIC  
SOCIALIST PARTY (DSP) AND CLEAN GOVERNMENT PARTY (CGP)  
ARE STILL SEEN AS LIKELY GAINERS, EXTENDING DECEMBER 1976  
LOWER HOUSE ELECTION CENTRIST "BOOCM." JUST HOW WELL  
CENTRISTS WILL FARE, HOWEVER, DEPENDS IMPORTANTLY ON  
TWO VARIABLES WHICH MAKE ELECTION HARD TO PREDICT. FIRST  
IS "FLOATING VOTE" -- ACCORDING TO JULY 6 YOMIURI POLL,  
FULLY 25.6 PERCENT OF 40,000 RESPONDENTS WERE UNDECIDED. NLC  
IN PARTICULAR, WHOSE ORGANIZED SUPPORT IS MODEST, IS  
GOING ALL OUT TO WIN THESE VOTERS. OTHER MAJOR VARIABLE  
IS VOTER TURNOUT. DESPITE VIGOROUS CAMPAIGNING OVER  
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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 AS-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

TRSE-00 EB-07 OMB-01 /070 W

-----101107 081101Z /10

O R 080923Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9255

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL NAHA

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PAST TWO WEEKS BY ALL PARTIES, VOTER INTEREST HAS BEEN RELATIVELY LOW. YOMIURI SURVEY FOUND ONLY 58.5 PERCENT OF THOSE REGISTERED INTENDED TO VOTE, COMPARED WITH 73.2 PERCENT WHO VOTED IN 1974 ELECTION. LOW TURNOUT WOULD HURT NLC AND, TO SOME EXTENT, DSP.

5. THIS WEEK'S MEDIA PREDICTIONS ARE UNUSUALLY SEIMILAR AND HAVE LDP LOSING ITS MAJORITY BY FEW SEATS. COMPOSITE OF SEVEN PROGNOSTICATIONS (WITH SEATS AT STAKE IN PARENTHESES) INDICATE LOSERS AS: LDP 61 (65); JSP 27 (32); AND JCP 7 (9). GAINERS WOULD BE  
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CENTRISTS: CGP 12 (10); DSP 6 (5); AND NLC 6 (0). MEDIA PREDICT 3 MINOR PARTY AND 4 INDEPENDENT WINNERS. TWO INDEPENDENTS (TAKAHASHI IN NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY AND TAHARA IN KAGOSHIMA) ARE EXPECTED TO JOIN LDP AFTER ELECTION; ADDITIONAL CONSERVATIVE INDEPENDENT (ETO IN OITA) COULD ALSO WIN BUT WOULD PROBABLY BE SLOWER TO JOIN LDP. GIVEN NUMBER OF CLOSE CONTESTS, HOWEVER, MEDIA IS HEDGING BETS WITH SPREDS UP TO 13 SEATS FOR LDP AND JSP.

6. EMBASSY'S OWN PREDICTION, BASED ON FIELD TRIPS, CONSTITUENT-POST INPUTS AND DISTRICT-BY-DISTRICT ANALYSIS, IS VERY SIMILAR. ALTHOUGH IT COULD GO A FEW SEATS EITHER WAY, WE GIVE LDP 61, JSP 27, CGP 13, JCP 7, DSP 6, NLC 5, MINOR PARTIES 3, AND INDEPENDENTS 4. INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVES WOULD ADD ADDITIONAL 2-3

SEATS TO LDP TOTAL, IMPROVING CHANCES OF REACHING 60-SEAT "SUCCESS" LEVEL. WE VIEW OUTCOME ALONG THESE LINES AS DEFINITELY MOST LIKELY SCENARIO. COUNTING HOLDOVERS, THESE RESULTS WOULD MEAN TOTAL UPPER HOUSE STRENGTHS OF: LDP 122, JSP 56, CGP 27, JCP 18, DSP 11, NLC 6, MINOR PARTIES 3, AND INDEPENDENTS 8 (INCLUDING TWO LIKELY TO JOIN LDP).

7. TWO OTHER SCENARIOS ARE LESS LIKELY BUT POSSIBLE. FIRST, LDP COULD WITH INDEPENDENTS RETAIN ITS MAJORITY (65 SEATS) OR EVEN GAIN A SEAT OR TWO. CANDIDATES LDP HAS FIELDING IN LOCAL CONSTITUENCIES, ALTHOUGH OFTEN ELDERLY, WERE CONSCIOUSLY LIMITED IN NUMBER, CAREFULLY CHOSEN AND WELL-CONNECTED LOCALLY. THAT LOCAL STRENGTH, PLUS CURRENT FULL-SCALE, COORDINATED CAMPAIGN EFFORTS COULD PROVE DECISIVE IN SEVERAL CLOSE CONTESTS WHERE JSP LEAD IS NARROW. MODEST LDP GAINS IN NATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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CONSTITUENCY COULD COME ABOUT IF FLOATING VOTE FAILED TO TURN OUT IN NUMBERS.

8. LEAST LIKELY OUTCOME WOULD BE LDP FALLING BELOW 60 SEATS TO 54-59 RANGE. KEY FACTOR IN THIS SCENARIO WOULD BE CENTRISTS, PARTICULARLY NLC, NOT ONLY ATTRACTING HEAVY FLOATING VOTE BUT ALSO SIPHONING OFF NORMALLY LDP VOTE. IN ADDITION, JSP WOULD HAVE TO PROVE UNEXPECTEDLY STRONG IN DEFENDING ITS RURAL SEATS. THESE RESULTS COULD AFFECT PRIMIN FUKUDA'S POSITION, DIET MANAGEMENT AND INTERPRETATION OF LONGER TERM JAPANESE POLITICAL TRENDS. INASMUCH AS LDP'S UPPER HOUSE, NOT LOWER HOUSE, MAJORITY IS AT STAKE, AND NON-CONFIDENCE MOTIONS CAN ONLY BE BROUGHT IN LOWER HOUSE, CONTINUED LDP ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT BE IN JEOPARDY (REF B).

9. CONSCIOUS OF COSTLY MIKI MISTAKE, FUKUDA HAS AVOIDED ANY NUMERICAL PREDICTION OF ELECTION OUTCOME. HIS POSITION, OF COURSE, WOULD BE STRENGTHENED MARKEDLY BY LDP RETENTION OF ITS UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY (65 SEATS). BUT IF, AS IS MORE LIKELY, LDP LOSES MAJORITY BUT WINS 60-64 SEATS (INCLUDING INDEPENDENTS), WE WOULD EXPECT ONLY MODERATE CRITICISM OF FUKUDA WITHIN LDP SINCE PARTY WON ONLY 62 SEATS IN 1971 AND IN 1974.

10. IF LDP WINS FEWER THAN 60 SEATS (CONSERVATIVE INDEPENDENTS INCLUDED), HOWEVER, INTRA-LDP CRITICISM OF FUKUDA IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE SHARP, BUT STILL NOT FATAL. CURRENT OPPOSITION PARTY CALLS FOR FUKUDA TO STEP DOWN ARE MERELY ELECTION POSTURING; ANTI-FUKUDA ELEMENTS WITHIN LDP NOW APPEAR VERY UNLIKELY TO BOLT LDP; AND THERE IS

NO WIDELY AGREED SUCCESSOR TO FUKUDA IN SIGHT. (OHIRA, AS LDP SEC GEN, WOULD HAVE TO ACCEPT LARGE SHARE OF BLAME FOR LDP SET BACK.) FUKUDA COULD ALSO USE CABINET SHUFFLE TO STILL INTRA-PARTY CRITICISM. FAIRLY SHARP ELECTION SET BACK WOULD, HOWEVER, RAISE STRONG DOUBTS ABOUT  
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FUKUDA'S LEADING PARTY IN ANOTHER ELECTION.

11. ALL LEGISLATION MUST PASS DIET UPPER HOUSE (AS WELL AS LOWER) BY SIMPLE MAJORITY EXCEPT FOR BUDGET BILLS AND TEATIES. THUS, OPPOSITION PARTIES WITH VOTING MAJORITY COULD DEFEAT LDP-SPONSORED LEGISLATION, AND THIS MAY HAPPEN ON OCCASION. BASED ON RECENT EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT IS FAR MORE LIKELY LDP, WITH HELP OF ONE OR MORE SMALLER CENTRIST PARTIES, WILL BE ABLE TO PASS MOST NEEDED LEGISLATION. SHOULD OPPOSITION PARTIES BALK, LOWER HOUSE DISSOLUTION THREAT COULD BE USED EFFECTIVELY.

12. WE EXPECT NO FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN JAPANESE POLICY TOWARD US AS RESULT OF ELECTION. AS NOTED REF B, ECONOMIC TIES ARE SO BROAD THAT PROFOUND CHANGE BASED ON ELECTION OUTCOME IS ALMOST INCONCEIVABLE. ORDERLY MARKETING AGREEMENTS DO NOT REQUIRE DIET APPROVAL AND, ON BROADER ISSUES SUCH AS CIVIL AVIATION, FISHERIES OR REPROCESSING, SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES ARE FEW AMONG PARTIES ACROSS POLITICAL SPECTRUM. WITH CENTRIST PARTIES INCREASINGLY COMMITTED TO MUTUAL SECURITY TREATY AND PRESENT STATUS OF U.S. FORCES, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT EITHER TO BE CHALLENGED IN ELECTION WAKE, PARTICULARLY IF SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS ARE SET BACK AS EXPECTED. ON MATTERS WHICH MIGHT ATTRACT DIET NOTICE OR REQUIRE DIET ACTION, WE WOULD ALSO EXPECT ADDITIONAL CAUTION ON PART OF NORMALLY SYMPATHETIC POLITICIANS AND BUREAUCRATS.

13. ALL IN ALL, WHAT SEEMS IN STORE IS INCREMENTAL CHANGE. IF LDP UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY IN LOST, ESPECIALLY BY SIGNIFICANT MARGIN, BUSINESS, LABOR, MEDIA AND EVEN YOUNGER CANDIDATES THEMSELVES MIGHT RECONSIDER LONG-  
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STANDING POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS. THIS WOULD ACCELERATE POLITICAL REORDERING, BUT SUBSTRUCTURAL SHIFTS WHICH NORMALLY PRECEDE SIGNIFICANT JAPANESE POLITICAL CHANGE TAKE TIME. IN ABSENCE OF EXTERNAL SPUR, WE WOULD GUESS

TWO TO THREE YEARS AT LEAST. ON OTHER HAND, IF LDP HOLDS  
ITS OWN, IT MAY BE ABLE TO CALL INTO QUESTION WIDE  
EXPECTATIONS OF "RESTRUCTURING" OF JAPANESE POLITICAL  
SPECTRUM.  
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## Message Attributes

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